

OVC| MARCH 2026

PROGRESS



Updates on the progress of Orthodox Volunteer Corps



Pushing Out Joy

Mary works with mothers. Some fled their homelands, others fled domestic abuse; they all have young children and little income. They all met Mary through her OVC service placement.

Recently, Mary gave a tour of her placement to members of the OVC Board of Directors. She showed racks of children's clothing, a room of car seats and cribs, and a vault (stacked floor to ceiling) of diapers. Mary explained the goals of the program, the case load, and, most importantly, the women she has come to know. She told the story of one mother who fled an abusive partner, battles mice in her apartment (and violence outside it), and pours all she's got into her young daughter. Following the story, a board member asked Mary a question: How do you manage the weight of this work? How are you not crushed by it? Mary paused for a moment, began with a caveat ("this may sound odd, but I really mean it"), and then gave an extraordinary answer: **"I push out joy. If I keep pushing out joy, there's no space left for anything else."**



More than halfway through 4th year

We're past the midpoint of our fourth program year. We have our largest cohort to date and a diverse set of service placements. We recently finished recruitment for next year and got the largest number of applications ever. We launched our part-time program in Boston. We are planning for expansion to a third city and will share details soon. We have added new alumni programming.

Service Updates

- 12 Service Placement Partners
- Areas of service: Children and Youth, Homeless Shelters and Housing Services, Medical Clinics, Public Health, Immigrants and Refugees
- In addition to direct service, Corps Members are learning back-end skills:
 - Policy research on behalf of those formerly incarcerated
 - Medical protocols for health-care facilities
 - Volunteer management
 - Fundraising and event planning



Why we do this work

But maybe the most important thing to share is a reminder about why we do this work. We do it, as Mary does, for joy. In service, we pour out love because God first loved us. We push out joy because the joy of the Lord is our strength. Joy, love, and service are interwoven. As Mother Maria (our patron saint), puts it: “This is the measure of love ... when one’s soul takes up another person’s cross.” Our Corps Members are striving daily for that measure. It is a sacred work.

Alumni Updates

- Alumni are meeting monthly for reflection, fellowship, and study on how to sustain service after OVC.
- Our new Chief Program Officer, Katrina Bitar, has been offering professional coaching sessions to our alums.



OVC Reach - Boston

- Our part-time program has launched in Boston! We are running it in partnership with the Telos Center of CrossRoad Institute who graciously allows us to use their space each month.
- Young adults in Boston are meeting monthly for discussions on Orthodox and Service and volunteering at local nonprofits.
- Over 50 young adults participate

OVC Reach - Pittsburgh

- This is the 3rd year of Reach in Pittsburgh.
- Service work has included planting trees in a low-income neighborhood, cleaning the facilities of an after-school program, and preparing a Christmas celebration for a homeless shelter.



We are profoundly grateful that you are a part of this sacred work. Thank you!

With love in Christ,
Michael Sider-Rose & Kyra Limberakis

